(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that all of them belonged to a minority community; and

(c) if so, whether it is a mere coincidence or is there more in it as feared in the minority community' circle?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Government have decided to compulsorily retire Air Marshal Manjit Singh Sekhon with effect from 21.6.2002. All other Air Marshals who retired during the last one year either superannuated or proceeded on pre-mature retirement.

Elections to Cantonment Boards

4398. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE to pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the High Level Committee has reviewed scenario of all cantonments across the country as reported in the Indian Express dated the 23rd February, 2002;

(b) if so, the findings of the Committee;

(c) whether Government have postponed election in all Cantonment Boards;

(d) if so, the reasons therefore; and

(e) by when, the election will be held?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FRRNANDES): (a) and (b) The committee constituted to examine the merger of Indian Defence Estate Service with the Military Engineering Service has not finalized its'findings.

(c) to (e) Yes, Sir. No time frame has been fixed for holding of elections to Cantonment Boards.